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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BANGKOK 004204

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SUBJ: THAI MFA COMMENTS ON TEA BANH, FOC, AND THE KHMER
ROUGE

REF: A) BANGKOK 4005 B) STATE 54663 C) BANGKOK 4115
D) STATE 55803

1.(U) CLASSIFIED BY ACTING POL SECTION CHIEF MARC NICHOLSON.
REASON: 1.5(B) AND (D).

2.(U) ACTION REQUESTED -- SEE PARA 18.

SUMMARY

3.(S) ON 27 MARCH, MFA DIVISION I (INDOCHINA) DIRECTOR
NOPADOL GUNAVIBOOL BRIEFED POLOFF ON DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER
SUKHUMBHAND'S 24 MARCH MEETING WITH CAMBODIAN DEFENSE
MINISTER TEA BANH AND MINISTER OF STATE SOK AN. NOPADOL
DESCRIBED THAI AND CAMBODIAN VIEWS ON THE CEASE-FIRE IN
NORTHWESTERN CAMBODIA, AMNESTY FOR FUNCINPEC COMMANDERS, AND
THE JULY 26 ELECTIONS. HE SAID HUN SEN WOULD VISIT THAILAND
IN EARLY MAY. NOPADOL ALSO DESCRIBED THE SCHEDULE FOR THE
UPCOMING FRIENDS OF CAMBODIA (FOC) MEETING, AND HE STRESSED
THAI SENSITIVITY ABOUT THE POSSIBLE DETENTION OF KHMER ROUGE
LEADERS. END SUMMARY.

4.(C) THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF NOPADOL'S BRIEFING WAS TO
DISCUSS SUKHUMBHAND'S MEETING WITH TEA BANH. NOPADOL
DESCRIBED THE 90-MINUTE SUKHUMBHAND-TEA BANH MEETING AS
"RESTRICTED," ATTENDED ONLY BY CPP MINISTER OF STATE SOK AN,
THAI MFA PERMANENT SECRETARY SAROJ CHAVANAVIRAJ, AND THAI
AMBASSADOR TO CAMBODIA DOMDEJ BUNNAG. PRESENT AT NOPADOL'S
BRIEFING WERE POLOFF AND EMBOFFS FROM AUSTRALIA, GERMANY,
NEW ZEALAND, AND SINGAPORE. NOPADOL'S COMMENTS SUPPLEMENT
THE READ-OUT PROVIDED BY SUKHUMBHAND TO THE DCM (REF A).

TIMING OF HUN SEN'S VISIT

5.(C) NOPADOL SAID THAT THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF TEA BANH'S
VISIT WAS TO PREPARE FOR HUN SEN'S TRIP TO BANGKOK, WHICH
WOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE FIRST WEEK OF MAY. THE RTG HAD
REQUESTED AN EARLIER DATE, BUT HUN SEN WOULD CONTINUE TO BE
IN MOURNING FOR THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER UNTIL THE END OF
APRIL.

MOVING FORWARD WITH THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

6.(C) NOPADOL SAID THAT SOK AN HAD CONFIRMED THAT THE
CAMBODIAN ELECTORAL LAW'S RESIDENCY PROVISIONS (AN OBSTACLE
TO RANARIDDH'S PARTICIPATION) WOULD BE AMENDED BY THE

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BY 26 MARCH. NOPADOL NOTED THAT THIS HAD NOT YET OCCURRED AS PROMISED. HE SAID THE CAMBODIANS HAD ALSO SAID THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WOULD:

- FACILITATE THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL ELECTION COMMITTEE (NEC);
- ALLOW FUNCINPEC MEMBERS AND OTHER CAMBODIANS ABROAD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION;
- DROP THE PROVISION REQUIRING CANDIDATES TO PRODUCE VOTER CARDS WHEN REGISTERING THEIR CANDIDACIES; AND
- REDUCE THE PARTY REGISTRATION DEADLINE FROM 120 DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION TO 80 DAYS.

CONTRACTING ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

7.(C) NOPADOL SAID SOK AN HAD COMMENTED ON THE RGC'S CONTRACT WITH THE CICCONE FIRM FOR ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS. SOK AN HAD SAID THAT THE CONTRACT WAS NOT INTENDED TO OBIVIATE THE NEED FOR FOREIGN AID, BUT THE RGC NEEDED A BACK-UP SERVICE-PROVIDER IN CASE AID WAS NOT FORTHCOMING. ON 25 MARCH, THE THAIS RELAYED THIS STATEMENT TO PRINCE RANARIDDH, WHO RHETORICALLY ASKED WHAT WOULD PROMPT THE RGC TO DOUBT THAT AID WOULD BE FORTHCOMING, GIVEN THAT VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS HAD ALREADY SIGNED AID AGREEMENTS. RANARIDDH ALSO DENOUNCED CAMBODIAN INTERIOR MINISTER SAR KHENG'S STATEMENT THAT HE HAD BEEN UNAWARE OF THE CONTRACT WITH CICCONE.

8.(C) NOPADOL SAID THAT THE RTG FELT THAT THE CONTRACT HAD MOST LIKELY BEEN SEEN BY THE CPP AS A WAY TO PRESSURE DONORS TO RELEASE MONEY, BUT HE WITHHELD FURTHER JUDGMENT AS HE HAD NOT YET SEEN THE CONTRACT AND HE BELIEVED THE RGC DID INDEED REQUIRE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ELECTIONS.

THAI ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

9.(C) IN THE 24 MARCH MEETING, SAROJ HAD SAID THAT THE ASEAN COUNTRIES, IN THE MIDST OF THEIR ECONOMIC CRISIS, WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE THE RGC WITH TECHNICAL BUT NOT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. SUCH ASSISTANCE WOULD MOST LIKELY BE ORGANIZED ON A BILATERAL BASIS AND INVOLVE THE TRAINING OF PERSONNEL, BUT NOPADOL STRESSED THAT THE RGC HAD NOT YET INDICATED WHAT TYPE OF ASSISTANCE IT REQUIRED. SOK AN REPORTEDLY SAID HE WOULD CONSULT WITH HUN SEN REGARDING THE ISSUANCE OF INVITATIONS TO ASEAN TO SEND ELECTION OBSERVERS AND REGARDING CONSULTATION WITH THE NEC TO DETERMINE WHAT SORT OF ASSISTANCE WOULD BE REQUIRED. NOPADOL ESTIMATED THAT THAILAND MIGHT PROVIDE 10 ELECTION OBSERVERS, WITH ALL OF ASEAN PROVIDING 75 OF THE ANTICIPATED TOTAL OF 300-350.

CEASE-FIRE TALKS

10.(C) NOPADOL SAID THAT SUKHUMBHAND HAD STRESSED THAT THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE JAPANESE PEACE PLAN COULD PROCEED SIMULTANEOUSLY, E.G. RANARIDDH COULD RETURN BEFORE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEASE-FIRE AND TROOP REINTEGRATION. SUKHUMBHAND HAD URGED TEA BANH TO ONCE AGAIN DISPATCH GENERALS TO MEET WITH FUNCINPEC ARMED RESISTANCE COMMANDER LTG NHEK BUN CHHAY, AND HE (SUKHUMBHAND) SAID THE RTG WAS "READY TO FACILITATE THESE TALKS." TEA BANH AGREED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO FULLY IMPLEMENT THE CEASE-FIRE IN ORDER THAT DISPLACED PERSONS COULD RETURN TO CAMBODIA AND RANARIDDH WOULD NOT BE DISQUALIFIED FROM RUNNING IN THE ELECTION ON THE BASIS OF FUNCINPEC CONTROLLING ITS OWN ARMED FORCES.

11.(C) WHEN THE RTG RELAYED TEA BANH'S COMMENT TO RANARIDDH, THE PRINCE REPLIED THAT THE RESISTANCE FORCES IN QUESTION WERE RCAF SOLDIERS (LOYAL TO BUT NOT ORGANIZATIONALLY MEMBERS OF FUNCINPEC) UNDER THE COMMAND OF RCAF GENERALS APPOINTED BY THE KING. RANARIDDH THEN UNDERMINED HIS OWN ARGUMENT (ABOUT CONTROL OVER RESISTANCE FORCES) BY POINTING

OUT THAT HE HAD BEEN THE FIRST TO ORDER A UNILATERAL CEASE-FIRE.

AMNESTY FOR FUNCINPEC COMMANDERS

12.(C) NOPADOL SAID THAT SUKHUMBHAND HAD ASKED IF HUN SEN WOULD OBJECT TO AMNESTY FOR FUNCINPEC COMMANDERS NHEK BUN CHHAY AND SEREY KOSAL. SOK AN REPLIED THAT HE HAD NOT THOUGHT ABOUT THAT MATTER, BUT, IN A SUBSEQUENT LUNCH MEETING, TEA BANH SAID HE FORESAW NO DIFFICULTY WITH AMNESTY. (NOTE: IT APPEARS AS OF 30 MARCH THAT THE KING HAS DECLINED TO GRANT AMNESTY GIVEN OBJECTIONS RAISED BY HUN SEN. END NOTE.)

SUKHUMBHAND NOT TO ACCOMPANY RANARIDDH

13.(C) AFTER CONCLUDING HIS DISCUSSION OF THE TEA BANH MEETING, NOPADOL SAID THAT SUKHUMBHAND WOULD NOT ACCOMPANY RANARIDDH BACK TO CAMBODIA ON 30 MARCH. HE SAID THAT SUKHUMBHAND HAD MADE HIS INITIAL OFFER DURING A TIME WHEN RANARIDDH'S AMNESTY WAS UNCERTAIN, AND THE PRINCE APPEARED TO FACE ARREST UPON RETURN.

SCHEDULE FOR THE 19 APRIL FOC MEETING

14.(C) NOPADOL SAID THAT THE 19 APRIL FOC MEETING WOULD FOLLOW THE SCHEDULE OF THE GROUP'S LAST GATHERING IN MANILA. HE SAID INDONESIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ALATAS WOULD ARRIVE IN THE AFTERNOON OF 18 APRIL, IN TIME FOR A TROIKA MEETING THAT EVENING. THE FOC MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE AT THE REGENT HOTEL ON THE MORNING OF 19 APRIL AND END AROUND 1330 HRS, FOLLOWED BY A TROIKA PRESS CONFERENCE THAT AFTERNOON. (NOTE: IT APPEARS THAT A/S ROTH WOULD NEED TO DEPART NO LATER THAN 1345 HRS IN ORDER TO CATCH A 1515 HRS FLIGHT. END NOTE.)

15.(C) NOPADOL SAID THAT WHILE THAILAND WOULD BE HOSTING THE MEETING, THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT WOULD ONCE AGAIN CHAIR IT (AND, ACCORDINGLY, INVITATIONS WOULD BE SENT OUT BY PHILIPPINE EMBASSIES). HE SAID THE MFA HAD MADE A BLOCK BOOKING AT THE REGENT AND REQUESTED TO BE INFORMED OF EACH GOVERNMENT'S PARTICIPANTS SOONEST. HE NOTED THAT THE 6 MARCH FOC COMMUNIQUE HAD CALLED FOR THE 19 APRIL MEETING TO TAKE PLACE AT A "HIGH LEVEL," AND HE SEEMED SURPRISED THAT MOST EMBOFFS BELIEVED THEY WOULD BE REPRESENTED AT THE SAME LEVEL AS IN PREVIOUS FOC MEETINGS. (NOTE: THE GOJ WILL REPORTEDLY BE REPRESENTED BY VICE FOREIGN MINISTER KOMURA. END NOTE.)

THE KHMER ROUGE

16.(S) AFTER THE GROUP MEETING, POLOFF AND NOPADOL PRIVATELY DISCUSSED REPORTS OF LARGE-SCALE KHMER ROUGE DEFECTIONS. NOPADOL SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THE FIGHTING HAD ENDED BY THE AFTERNOON OF 27 MARCH AND THAT THE KHMER ROUGE LEADERS WOULD NOT NEED TO CROSS INTO THAILAND. HE SAID THAT HE DOUBTED THE RGC CONTROLLED ANLONG VENG, AND HE ADDED THAT HE HAD HEARD THE SPLIT WITHIN THE KHMER ROUGE HAD ORIGINATED OVER LOGGING (NFI). PER REF B, POLOFF STRESSED THE USG INTEREST IN SEEING THE KHMER ROUGE LEADERS DETAINED UNTIL THEY COULD BE TRIED IN AN APPROPRIATE VENUE. (NOTE: AS REPORTED IN REF C, THE DCM HAD ON THE SAME DAY CONVEYED OUR CONCERN TO SUKHUMBHAND. END NOTE.) NOPADOL RESPONDED THAT IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO KEEP THE DETENTION OF K.R. LEADERS SECRET WHILE THEY REMAINED IN THAILAND AND THAT THE RTG WOULD WANT THEM MOVED OUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

17.(S) BASED ON REF D, POLOFF SPOKE TO NOPADOL ON 30 MARCH TO REASSURE HIM THAT THE USG WAS EXPLORING (WITH VARYING DEGREES OF FORMALITY) THE OPTION OF KHMER ROUGE TRIALS IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES. NOPADOL SAID THAT HE HAD CHECKED WITH HIS MILITARY SOURCES AND, TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE, THE KHMER ROUGE LEADERS WERE STILL IN CAMBODIA.

ACTION REQUESTED

18.(U) PLEASE ADVISE SOONEST OF U.S. ATTENDEES AT THE 19
APRIL FOC MEETING AND THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOTEL ROOMS
REQUIRED. UNLESS OTHERWISE ADVISED, WE WILL PLAN ON U.S.
ATTENDEES STAYING AT THE REGENT AS PART OF THE THAI BLOCK
BOOKING.

ITOH